

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 2, line 22, and ending on page 2, line 25, with the following paragraph. A marked-up copy of the original paragraph, showing the changes made thereto, is attached.

1
--Japanese Patent Application Laid-open No. 7-128635 discloses a technique for adjusting the quantity of light entering a photoelectric converter by using a liquid crystal filter that has variable density.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 27, line 20, and ending on page 27, line 27, with the following paragraph. A marked-up copy of the original paragraph, showing the changes made thereto, is attached.

2
--In this embodiment, the above-described optical element is used to form a diaphragm or a shutter and is incorporated in an imaging lens. For example, as shown in Figs. 11A and 11B, a lens 1a, which functions both as a shutter and as a diaphragm, is formed and is placed at the end of a lens group closest to an image formation plane 4. In this manner, an optical system smaller in size and improved in performance can be achieved.--

IN THE CLAIMS:

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Please cancel claims 16 and 29 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend claims 17 and 30 as follows. A marked-up copy of the claims is attached.